

Parenting the First Year

Months
7-8

How Baby Is Changing

Your baby is now sitting better as his lower back gets stronger. He may now be able to keep busy for a short time playing with toys on the floor.

He is ready to get moving! Soon you'll see him pushing up on his hands and knees and creeping along the floor. When he rocks back and forth on his hands and knees, crawling probably isn't too far off.

Some babies never crawl! About a third of babies skip crawling and move right to walking. Don't worry if your baby doesn't seem interested.

Watch his hands. He can pass a toy from one hand to the other. Give him two at a time. What does he do when you hand him a third toy?

Your baby may like finger foods, such as O-shaped cereal, that let him practice picking things up and feeding himself.

Your baby is trying new sounds. Keep listening! He may choose a favorite or two that he says often. Imitate the sounds so he can hear them again. Your baby will love to hear you saying his "words."

Have You Met Other Parents?

While out for a walk or shopping, you may meet other parents with their babies. Stop and talk. Ask how old their baby is. It's fun to compare notes.

Try asking them:

How has your baby changed in the last week or two? Has she learned anything new?

What is her favorite time of the day? What does she enjoy doing the most?

You will have your own questions, too. Perhaps they know a trick to soothe a crying baby or to make feeding easier. Ask them. They are probably like you. They have learned a lot, and they love to talk about their baby!



Discipline: Keeping Calm

When your baby is pulling leaves off your favorite plant one by one or smearing cereal in his hair, it's hard to stay calm.

If tempting things like plants or wastebaskets are left in your baby's reach, he explores them. The easiest way to keep him out of trouble is to put things where he can't get them.

Babies may do things that are upsetting to parents, **but they don't do them on purpose to annoy you.** They need opportunities to explore in a safe environment. These experiences lay the groundwork for physical, social and intellectual growth.

Feeding babies is messy. They like to help, and their efforts help them learn to feed themselves. You can reduce the mess, though. For example, let your baby help with less messy foods. Try giving him two crackers. When he finishes, give him two more.

Your baby does not drop food to upset you. He is just learning where things go when they fall.

When your baby bangs toys together, it's because he likes the noise. If it gets on your nerves, give him a quiet toy and put the noisy ones away for a while.

Your Baby Wants You To Know by the End of Eight Months

How I Grow

- I creep on my stomach. I may even crawl.
- I can get around on my back by lifting my bottom and pushing with my feet.
- I balance myself and sit for a while with no support.
- I keep my legs straight when you pull me up, and I try to stand by myself.
- I like to put my toes in my mouth.
- I may have some teeth.
- I feed myself finger foods, but I'm pretty messy!
- I play with a spoon and a cup, but I'm not so good at using them yet.

How I Talk

- I may begin to imitate the sounds I hear. That's how I learn.
- I say several sounds like ma, mi, da, di and ba in one breath.

How I Respond

- I want to be included in all family activities.
- I like to see and touch myself in the mirror.
- I get excited at pictures of babies.
- I like to grab, shake and bang things and put them in my mouth.

How I Understand

- I concentrate better now, and I spend lots of time examining things.
- I can tell if something is near or far.
- I can tell when people are angry or happy by the way they look and talk.

How I Feel

- I'm afraid of strangers, so stay with me when they're around.
- I feel strongly about what I want and don't want to do.
- I feel playful and like to tease.

How You Can Help Me Learn

- Give me toys that make noise, such as bells, music boxes or rattles.
- Let me try to feed myself, even though it is messy.
- Say different sounds for me to imitate.
- Fill a drawer in the kitchen with things I can play with such as wooden spoons, plastic bottles, butter tubs, pots and pans, etc.

He or She, Him or Her

These newsletters give equal time to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." Keep in mind that we are talking about all children when we use "he" or "she."

REMINDER: Your baby should have a health-care provider visit at 9 months of age.

Children are very different from each other. Don't worry if your child manages some skills earlier or later than other children. Most children tend to focus on one area, like physical or language development, and pay less attention to other areas. Get to know your unique baby and celebrate each new skill with him!

Summer Safety

During the summer months, parents should protect their baby from mosquito bites. Here are some simple steps you should follow:

- Do not use mosquito repellent or DEET products on children younger than 2 months.

If you use DEET on a child please follow these recommendations:

- DEET should not be applied more than once a day.
- Apply DEET sparingly on exposed skin; do not use under clothing.
- Do not use DEET on the hands of young children and avoid applying to areas around the eyes and mouth.
- Do not use DEET over cuts, wounds or irritated skin.
- Avoid spraying in enclosed areas. Do not use DEET near food.
- Wash treated skin with soap and water after returning indoors. Wash treated clothing.
- The concentration of DEET varies significantly from product to product, so read the label. Thirty percent is the maximum concentration acceptable for children.
- Avoid taking baby outside during dusk.
- Put long pants and long sleeves on baby while outdoors during the evening.
- Mosquito netting can be used over infant carriers, hats and strollers.
- Remove containers with standing water that provide breeding places for mosquitoes.

Baby's Eyes

Since babies learn a lot by looking, it is helpful for you to know about their eyes and vision.

Vision specialists say it is normal for an infant's eyes to sometimes look crossed for *a moment or two* occasionally during the first 5 or 6 months of life.

It takes time to develop having both eyes working together. If your baby's eyes are crossed often or if you have other vision concerns, talk to your health-care provider or an eye specialist.

Children should have regular eye exams starting at age 3 1/2.

To help your baby's eyes develop:

Put her into the crib different ways so neither eye is favored when she looks around the room. Play with her in ways that use both eyes and both sides of her body.

Take her for walks or to the store so she can see different things. Zoos, parks, flea markets and museums are fun places for you and your baby to see new things together.

Language Games

Has your baby learned to blow air? Does he use his tongue on the roof of his mouth to make clicking sounds? These are two important steps toward learning to speak.

If you make a game out of blowing air and clicking your tongue, your child will try to imitate you.

Put a small ball on your baby's highchair tray and blow on it until it rolls toward him. See if he tries to blow it back to you.

Now is also a good time to play the "touch and name" game. Touch different parts of your baby's body and name them: "This is Billy's foot. Here is Billy's nose. Where are Billy's fingers?"

Touch parts of your own or your partner's body and do the same thing: "Here is Mommy's nose. Here is Daddy's nose. Here is Billy's nose." Save the game for times when your baby seems interested. Games should be fun, not forced.

This game helps your baby learn about himself and his body, understand the connection between words and objects, and practice speaking.

Most infants cannot point to a named body part until about 18 months of age. But research shows that beginning to play language games now will help your child learn.

Continue talking to your baby even when not playing language games. Tell him what you're doing as you work. Hearing you talk will help him learn to speak.

Sun Safety

Babies need fresh air and light. But the sun can be harmful — and not just direct sunlight. Glare from water, sand and snow makes the sun's rays stronger. Also, it's important to remember that clouds don't block out the sun's rays.

Baby skin is delicate and burns easily. Severe sunburns in childhood can lead to a greater risk of the most deadly form of skin cancer (malignant melanoma) later in life.

Some simple steps can help you and your baby enjoy the sun without sunburns:

- Stay out of the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest.
- Keep your baby in the shade.
- Put a hat on her, and dress her in lightweight clothes that cover the body.
- If you use a stroller, keep the sun shade on.
- When in the sun but not covered or shaded, put sunscreen lotion with a 15 or higher SPF (Sun Protection Factor) on your baby and yourself. Put the lotion on 30 minutes before you go out. Reapply every two hours.
- But since your baby's skin is so delicate, it's best to avoid the sun rather than depend on sunscreen.
- If you or your baby get sunburned, put cool, wet towels on the burns. Call your health-care provider for burns with a fever or blisters.
- Offer your baby liquids often while out in warm weather. Take breaks in the shade.

Storing Baby's Toys

Your baby probably has many toys by now, and you need somewhere to put them.

A large basket, even a plastic laundry basket, will keep all the toys in one place, and it is easy to move. Your baby can even play inside the basket.

A toy chest is a common place for toy storage. However, many parents find that toys get easily lost or broken, and babies may enjoy emptying the box on a regular basis. If you decide on a toy chest, look for these safety features:

- A lightweight lid that a small child can lift or a chest with no lid.
- Slow-release hinges so fingers don't get pinched and so the lid can't drop suddenly onto your child's head.
- Air holes so your child can breathe if he climbs inside the chest.
- Closings that *don't* lock automatically so your child doesn't get trapped if he climbs inside.
- No splinters or sharp metal edges that can cut.
- No decorative knobs or cut-out designs that can catch clothing or entrap.
- Also, check inside often for broken toys and small pieces.

Baby's Temperature

Most pediatricians and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) agree that a normal body temperature for a healthy baby is between 97 and 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (36 to 38 degrees Celsius).

Which Thermometer to Use for Taking a Temperature:

A digital thermometer is inexpensive and a safe alternative to a glass thermometer and it's easier to read. Tympanic or ear thermometers are not recommended for use in babies.

How to Take a Temperature

Under the armpit (for children over three months)

Place the tip of the thermometer in a dry armpit. Close the armpit by holding the elbow against the chest for five minutes (or until your thermometer beeps).

Rectal temperature (for children under three years)

Put a small amount of Vaseline or K-Y Jelly on the tip or bulb of a digital thermometer. Put the thermometer tip into the rectum no more than one inch and hold in place for two to three minutes (or until your thermometer beeps). Call your doctor if your baby is:

- Two months or younger and has a rectal temperature of 100.2 degrees F or higher, call immediately.
- Between three and six months and has a fever of 101 degrees F or greater, or is older than six months and has a temperature of 103 degrees F or higher.

Traveling With Baby

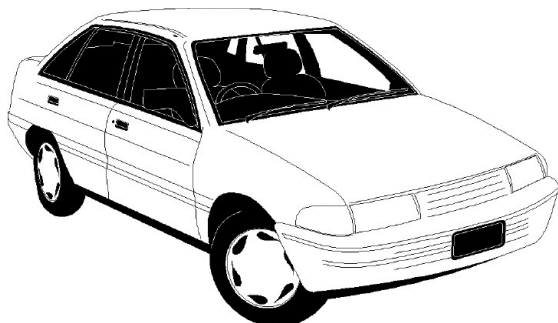
Becoming a parent doesn't have to mean giving up vacations. With a little extra care, you can travel with children — even babies.

General Tips

- Make a checklist of everything you'll need, and use it.
- Try to stick to normal routines for meal times and bedtime.
- Take along a favorite blanket or stuffed animal to help your baby feel more secure.
- Call ahead to reserve a crib if you'll be staying at a motel, or bring your own portable crib or playpen.
- Bring a thermometer, adhesive bandage, your health-care provider's phone number, any medicines (in the original bottles) that baby is taking and disposable diapers.
- Check fire exits and read hotel policies on fire procedure.
- Never leave children unattended in a vehicle.

Travel by Vehicle

- *Always* use an approved safety seat and *always* put young children in the back seat of a vehicle. Make sure the baby is securely strapped into the car seat and the car seat is tightly installed in the vehicle. The safety seat should face rearward until your baby is 1 year old. If you think your baby will weigh more than 20 pounds before age 1, look for a safety seat for babies weighing 30 to 35 pounds that you can use in the rear-facing position.
- If your vehicle has a passenger-side air bag, the safety seat must be used in the back seat. If your baby needs changing or feeding, stop in a safe location. If your baby is unhappy, stop. Don't take her out of the safety seat while the car is moving.
- Bring safe toys for her to play with in the safety seat, but give her only one or two at a time. Save some toys for later.
- Allow more time than you think you'll need. Stop at least once every two hours for a change of scenery, a stretch and a fresh diaper.
- Be sure the passenger area is free of heavy objects that could fly around and injure someone in a sudden stop.



Travel by Airplane

- Check the width of your car seat. A car seat no wider than 16 inches should fit in most coach seats.
- Check to make sure your child's car seat is allowed on an aircraft. It should have a sticker from the FAA.
- Ask for a front window seat (NOT in an exit row) for the car seat. Front seats have more room for babies things.
- You can increase the chance of having a free seat by flying at off-peak times.
- Pack your carry-on bag with medicine, toys, a change of clothes for you and for baby, non-messy snacks, baby food, bottles with formula or breast milk (ice packed) and disposable diapers.
- Change your baby in the airport restroom before boarding the plane. There is more room than in the plane.
- Sucking a bottle or pacifier may help keep your baby's ears from popping or clogging during the flight.

Baby's Hearing

From birth, babies can be startled by loud sounds. No child is too young to be tested, or helped, if you suspect a hearing loss. Remember, the earlier a hearing loss is discovered, the more effective medical and speech/hearing intervention will be for your child.

Age	Question	Behavior
3-6 Months	What does your baby do when you talk to him?	Awakens or is soothed by the sound of a familiar voice.
	Does your baby react to your voice even when you can't be seen?	Typically turns eyes and head in direction of the source of sound.
	What else stimulates your baby?	He enjoys rattles and noisy toys.
7-10 Months	When your baby can't see, how does he react to familiar footsteps . . . the dog barking . . . the phone ringing . . . candy paper rattling . . . someone's voice . . . his own name?	Turns head and shoulders toward sounds, even when he can't see what's happening. Such sounds do not have to be loud to cause a response.
11-15 Months	Can your baby point to or find familiar objects or people when asked?	Shows understanding of some common words such as "no" and "bye-bye."
	Examples: "Where is Jimmy?" "Find the ball."	Can point to or look at familiar objects or people on request.
	Are there different responses to different sounds?	Jabbers in response to a human voices. Is apt to cry when there is thunder. May frown when scolded.
	Does your baby enjoy listening to some sounds and imitating them?	Imitation means that he can hear sounds and match them.
15-18 Months	What next?	Follows simple spoken directions. Speaks first words, and by 18 months, speaks many more words.

A Hearing Checklist

Much of your baby's first year is spent learning *how* to listen. Through listening, your infant learns about the world, makes sounds and learns to talk.

Your baby's hearing can be checked within hours after birth. If you suspect your child has a hearing problem, tell your health-care provider right away.

If your child can't hear sounds or differences in sounds, then understanding words and speaking will be hard. Much language learning happens in the first five years, so it is very important to treat problems early. Don't wait until your child begins school.

The hearing checklist will help you follow your child's progress. It lists how children should behave at different age levels.

If your child often does not act as the checklist suggests, there may be a problem that needs further testing by a health-care provider. But be aware, a tired, hungry or sleepy baby may not respond the way he would if he were awake and content, so this is not a good time to observe hearing behaviors.

Even though your child may have had a hearing screening earlier in infancy, he still may have hearing loss. Hearing loss may be caused by frequent ear infections; some hearing loss may have a late on-set or is progressive. The child may pass the newborn hearing screening, then later develop a hearing loss.

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a topic that people do not like to talk about, but it does occur. Child sexual abuse can occur when a person forces a child to have any form of sexual contact or makes a child perform sexual acts. Sexual abuse also is defined as when a child is engaged in sexual activities and the child cannot understand, is developmentally unprepared and cannot give consent, and/or that violates the law.

Child sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and may include:

- Sexual or inappropriate touching.
- Exposing children to adult sexual activity or pornographic movies and photos.
- Having children pose, undress or perform in a sexual fashion on film or in person.

Children may have some of the following symptoms as a result of abuse:

- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Nightmares.
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing.
- Clinging to parents.
- Pain, swelling, itching or discharge in genital area.
- Bruises, bleeding or cuts in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas.
- Frequent touching of genitals or masturbation.
- Change in appetite.
- Lying.
- Reenactment of abuse using dolls, drawings or friends.
- Avoidance of certain relatives or friends.
- Anger or mood changes.

For more information, contact these local and national organizations:

- Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota at 800.403.9932 or 701.223.9052
- N.D. Council on Abused Women's Services at 888.255.6240 or 701.255.6240
- National Children's Alliance at 202.639.5097

To check for product recalls or
to report an unsafe product, call 800.638.2772.

Separation Anxiety

At certain times, your baby may have a hard time being away from you. It might be that he doesn't feel safe. Or he may simply be too young to understand that when you leave you will return. To him, your leaving means he will not see you again. This is often called *separation anxiety*.

Between 5 and 8 months of age, the first signs of separation anxiety appear. Your baby's anxiety may come and go over time. At this age, he can clearly recognize a difference between his parents and others who take care of him.

Your baby also can begin to distinguish between people he likes and dislikes, people who scare him and those who don't. He may not cry, but you may see a serious look or another sign of awareness that you're leaving.

This can be hard on parents as well as those taking care of the baby! An experienced child-care provider understands this and is able to soothe your baby after the separation. Most babies calm down after just a few minutes.

Separation anxiety is a normal part of your baby's development. Soon he will realize that you always return and that he is safe in the care of others. Actually, stranger anxiety is a sign that your baby has formed a strong attachment to you.

Having one primary caregiver helps your baby develop trust and may lessen his separation anxiety.



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

Community Health Section
600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301
Bismarck, ND 58505-0200
ND Toll-free: 800.472.2286
701.328.2493

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Help Is Out There

Regional Human Service Centers and County Social Service Offices

Regional Human Service Centers are located in the eight major cities in North Dakota with outreach services available to some surrounding communities. They provide individual, family and group counseling; alcohol and drug evaluations and treatment; therapy for sexual abuse; psychiatric evaluations; and other mental health-related services.

County Social Service Offices are located in all North Dakota counties. They provide information or services about child abuse and neglect; child-care licensing; financial assistance (food stamps, medical assistance, etc.); foster care; homemaker services; unwed parent services; high-risk child care; parent aides; and other services for the well-being of children and families.



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